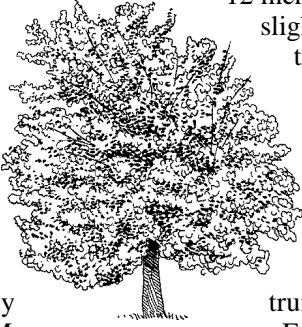


Fertilizing trees and shrubs

Shade and ornamental trees and shrubs often benefit from added fertilizer. Fertilization can result in more rapid growth; faster recovery from injury, pruning or pest problems; improved health and better foliage color.

Fertilizers are best applied during the dormant season (usually November through April). A second best time is during the spring and early summer months (May through June). Do not fertilize between July and November.

Established trees and shrubs can be fertilized by applying granular forms of fertilizer via holes distributed throughout the root zone. A soil auger or large



drill bit can be used to make the holes. A hole 1-1/2 to 2-1/2 inches in diameter is ideal.

The first row of holes should be made at the drip line. The holes should be about 10 - 12 inches deep, slanted slightly toward the tree trunk, and about two feet apart. Additional rows should continue at two-foot row spacing. No holes should be dug closer than 18 - 24 inches from the trunk.

Fertilizer rates are based on the diameter of the tree measured 4-1/2 feet above ground. (Diameter equals circumference divided by 3.14.) Use the following formulas to determine the correct amount of fertilizer:

For a tree 6 inches in trunk diameter or less: apply 1-2 pounds of 10-6-4, 10-20-0, 12-12-12, 6-10-4 or a similar low-analysis fertilizer per inch of trunk diameter. Any complete fertilizer containing 6-12 percent available nitrogen is acceptable. High amounts of phosphorus and potassium are not necessary.

For a tree over 6 inches in diameter: apply 3 pounds of 10-6-4 or a similar low-analysis fertilizer per inch of trunk diameter.

Distribute the required amount of fertilizer evenly among the holes, placing no more than 1/4-1/2 cup of fertilizer in each hole. If you have fertilizer left over, drill more holes. Water until the holes stand full of water. The holes can then be filled with soil or a mix of soil, sand and peat. (DJ)

Battery maintenance tips

To understand how to maintain a battery, you must know the enemies of long life.

Batteries stay healthiest when fully charged. Their biggest killer is being drained to zero percent. While deep-cycles are designed to resist draining, charging this type of battery after a complete drain decreases the unit's life.

When a battery discharges, the active material on both the negative and positive plates converts to lead sulfate. The plates become more alike in terms of their electrical charge, and the battery's acid, which conducts electricity between the

two poles, grows weaker. This results in a voltage drop because the battery depends on the polarity difference between the two plates, as well as the acid's strength. During charging, the process reverses itself. Therefore, if a battery is left in a discharged state for a long period of time, the damage can be irreversible. If you run a battery down, it's important to charge it as soon as possible.

The opposite, overcharged, can be even worse. This causes battery acid to percolate, which can then overflow or escape as gas through the vent, with resulting heat buildup, the plates

will soften and shed the charging grid's active material, causing a dramatic decrease in productivity.

Cold temperatures are ideal for storing batteries. Heat accelerates discharge. A battery will retain its charge indefinitely at temperatures less than 37 degrees F. so leaving it alone for the winter isn't a problem. The important thing is to make certain it's fully charged, because a deeply discharged battery's acid lowers a specific gravity similar to water and can freeze at temperatures near 10 degrees F. (DJ)

Acreage Insights



Tractor safety tips (part 2)

Tractors are one of the most important pieces of equipment on a farm, yet they are also among the most dangerous. More deaths are caused by tractors than by any other type of farm accident. It is therefore imperative that tractor owners routinely check their tractors and keep in mind the following safety guidelines:

- Be sure to have a slow moving vehicle emblem mounted on the rear of each tractor and each implement. This emblem should be centered between two and six feet above the ground.
- Review safety procedures in your manual regularly. Your operator's manual is the best safety guide you have, so make good use of it.
- Make sure the wheels of the tractor are set as wide as possible for a particular job. The broader the wheel base, the less likely it will be that the tractor will turn over. Make sure that your tractor is matched to its load. Many fatalities have been caused by the loss of control of a tractor that was going down hill with a heavy load. Even on level ground, the load should be no more than two times as heavy as the tractor. Make sure that your tractor's steering and braking mechanisms, gauges and lights are working properly. (DJ)

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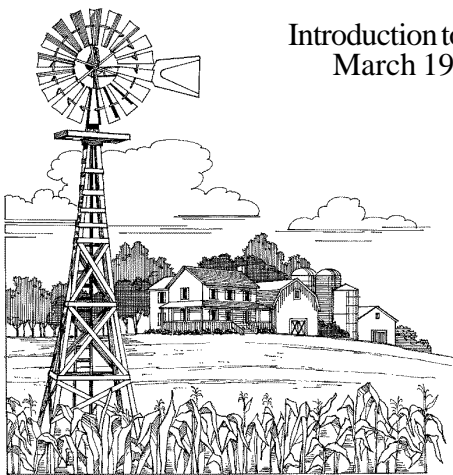
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Introduction to precision agriculture
March 19th 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Location:
Lancaster Extension Education Center
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Precision Agriculture has grown in importance and application as more agricultural producers become interested in this technology. This one-day seminar will introduce participants to the basics of this new and expanding field and provide information for future decisions. Participants will learn the principles of Precision Agriculture by both classroom instruction and hands-on examples. Topics include GPS technology, GIS technology, yield monitors and interpretation of

collected data.

Cost: \$15—Includes coffee, rolls, lunch and a reference manual.
Preregistration is requested, 441-7180. (DS)

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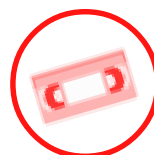
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